



SIERRA CLUB MARIN GROUP

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MLPA Blue Ribbon Taskforce c/o California Resources Agency
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The Sierra Club Marin Group, on behalf of our 7,000 Marin County members, wishes to comment on the Marine Life Protected Area (MLPA) Initiative Study Region options for the Central California coast (Point Arena to Point Conception). We believe it critical that the study area contain the Marin County coastline, where the Point Reyes Peninsula and its associated Farallones Islands and Cordell Bank are by far the most highly productive marine area on the Central California coast, and amongst the most highly productive areas in the world.

Consequently the northern boundary of the Study Area should be either Bodega Head, Pt Arena or some point between in order to capture this entire Cordell Bank/Point Reyes productive area. A northern boundary between Bodega Head and Pt Arena should be chosen that makes sense relative to user patterns and jurisdictional boundaries of potential partners such as the Point Reyes National Seashore, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS), whose northern boundary currently ends at Bodega Head but is proposed to be extended north towards Pt Arena.

The MLPA Study Area's southern boundary should be established to create generous proportions in order to provide regulators with a wide variety of habitat types and user patterns so that the most advantageous can be selected and the most difficult avoided. A southern boundary set at Pigeon Point or northward would not accomplish this end, so we suggest southern boundaries of the MLPA Study Area in order of preference (with reason why noted in parentheses) as follows: Point Sur (a biophysical boundary that includes Monterey Bay), Point Conception (a boundary that provides the largest variety of habitat and user patterns), Cambria (next largest variety, Monterey Bay NMS southern boundary) or Ano Nuevo (biophysical boundary, GFNMS southern management boundary).

We do not support prioritizing MLPA Study Areas proposed from the Golden Gate south that exclude this highly productive northern area around Cordell Bank/Point Reyes. It would of course be easier to protect southern marine areas with lower productivity and lower user impact such as from Point Sur south, however, that would defeat the purpose of the MLPA legislation, which is to protect the highly productive nursery areas that are the long-term sustainers of our fishing industry.

Sincerely,

Gordon Bennett, Sierra Club Marin Group Chair